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BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Courtesy.*



"AND THE OLD WILL SHALL STAND."

A YOUNG WIFE'S STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "REDLANDS, OR HOME TEMPER."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"WHAT is it, Ella?" asked Victor, laying down his pen, my persistent waiting indicating there was something unusual to be considered.
"I want advice. Will you tell me how I can best move your uncle to overlook the hasty speech which, I believe, Grover has repeated to him?"

No. 1323.—MAY 5, 1877.

Without contesting this conclusion, he looked at me with an air of seriousness, suggesting that my feminine ingenuity would help me far better than he could.

"He has always liked you so much that it ought not to be difficult for you to make friends with him again," said Victor, who evidently saw how desirable it was that I should do so.

"I have tried and failed. It is a great offence to wound the pride of a proud man. Were I only in

PRICE ONE PENNY.

disgrace I could bear it," answered I, with a smile of conscious indifference; "but for you I am sorry. Can he be about to punish you for my fault? His sending for the lawyer I don't like."

"Nor do I."

"Shall we write to Demarcay Evans for advice, or do you think he may be the gainer by your loss?"

"I am writing to him now."

"Is no part of the property entailed?"

"None whatever. My uncle, when he came of age, cut off the entail to please his father. There were cogent reasons for doing it."

Victor's chances were worse than I expected. Could it be possible that after all these years of expectation, and after all he had done to please Colonel Demarcay, this fine fortune, hanging, as it were, on so frail a thread as a woman's caprice, might pass away from him? "But you are his heir," I persisted, "the nearest—" I could not add dearest, knowing that Demarcay came before him, though just now he too had offended. "Would not the law give it to you?"

"If my uncle died intestate; but I know that he has made more than one will."

"But he has promised you his property, I believe? I know—" and here I stopped short, with my face ablaze at the recollection of what I had overheard to have been the inducement for Victor's marriage. "Has he not promised you Lornedale?" I repeated, confronting the delicate subject which had been the source of our first quarrel, our long estrangement.

"That is exactly what I am trying to recall," answered Victor, not looking at me, but with a brow as flushed as my own, remembering, no doubt, the vehement anger with which I had once reproached his compliance with his uncle's wishes. "It must have been in a misty, uncertain way," he proceeded; "for, on reflection, I am unable to recall anything decisive. Ever since I can recollect I supposed myself to be the person who would inherit after him, I and Hubert being the last of the name. I grew up with the expectation, and—yet I can recall no positive promise. It seems to have been one of those things taken for granted, but which, having their origin in some misty past, dissolve into the same vapour upon examination."

"But he must have promised you," I said, with an impatient movement of the foot, as well as in my tone of voice. "Did he not once threaten to leave the property away from you and the children? but now—now that you have complied with his conditions, how dare he do so?"

I had not meant to distress or humiliate my husband, nothing was further from my intention. Zeal alone actuated me; it was zeal for him and his that sent a passionate chord vibrating through my words, and sparkled in resentment from my eyes. We know ourselves sometimes so well that we cannot understand others mistaking us. Whilst my heart was brimming over with a zeal and deep love that only sought his welfare, regretting the one reckless ebullition of temper that endangered it, he thought I was covertly indulging myself in reproaches for a marriage still unforgiven. But I did not know this at first. I did not read that in the patient attitude he assumed after the few words that set me right.

"He threatened to marry himself," he said, and those words reminded me of the letter the colonel had given me.

"This," said I, holding the address towards him,

"your uncle asks you to post yourself if you ride out this morning."

Taking it from me, he slowly turned it over. "Does it mean anything?" I asked, an expression of deep annoyance having gathered over his countenance.

"Yes, if I mistake not, it means that you have your wish; that the wrongs you talked of, over which you still brood, the marriage you leave me to suppose you hate and will never pardon, is about to be avenged."

"Oh, Victor, don't be so cruel, don't think so ill of me," I exclaimed, and would have seized his hands in mine, but he had risen, and was already standing at the window some distance off. I looked at him sadly for a minute, doubtful what to do. Every throb of my heart might have been scrutinised; there was no resentment against him, no anger, no displeasure, only a sincere desire to avert the harm I had done; a craving, a yearning, a hope, painful because so weak and feeble, to be something in his life and home more than I was. I had yielded to passionate remonstrance, not to hurt him, but in a despairing sorrow that he should be so willing to let me go. My resolution was taken. Without attempting to approach, I called to him until he turned his face towards me where I stood, with my hands clasped together, in the middle of the room.

"Look at me, Victor, and see if, on my face you can trace a shade of falsehood," continued I, with my lips quivering and bitter tears in my heart, which I managed to keep there. "Oh, believe that, if through my indiscretion you and yours are deprived of your just inheritance, it will be the greatest sorrow of my life. I think I should never smile again. It shall not be, it shall not be," I added, with vehement decision, "not if I drag myself before the colonel on my knees day after day. I will humiliate myself to the dust first. The lawyer is not yet arrived," I said, and turning quickly whilst my self-control remained, I left the room without giving my husband time to reply.

Stimulated by well-grounded fears that some evil impended over those dearest to me, and stung by Victor's words, all merited as they once had been, I hastened along the passage leading to the colonel's study. That letter addressed to Mrs. Lyons, coupled with the remark that he had made other arrangements when I offered to accompany him into Normandy, was capable of easy explanation. Mrs. Lyons had a daughter—not in the first flush of youth, but still young, and, what was more important, favourably disposed towards Colonel Demarcay. This was not the first time he had turned his eyes towards her as a medium of gratifying his displeasure against the relatives who offended him.

"The old fool!" I murmured, deep down in my heart, yet looking carefully round, with compressed lips, lest, despite my will, the obnoxious thought should clothe itself in words; with so much at stake, the walls even were not safe. These ladies, I guessed, were to be invited to join him, and perhaps one of them would eventually marry him; such things happen every day.

Scarcely waiting for my impatient knock to receive an answer, I opened the door. The colonel sat still where I left him, with this difference, that the papers were now tidily arranged upon the table, and a tin box was on a chair beside him, in which he was turning over parchments and other documents as if in

search of something difficult to find. The brusque, hurried manner in which I advanced towards him occasioned an ominous frown. In his best moods he was annoyed when I so far forgot myself, and would gently suggest the substitution of matronly dignity for youthful impetuosity. It was rather unfortunate that my hot haste prevented me from reflecting how needlessly I was irritating him now when my best policy would have been to soothe. Never before had I asked a favour of Colonel Demarcay. With real indifference in my heart, I had hitherto carried it with a high hand, receiving without appreciating the many tokens of approval it was his pleasure to confer. My present position was therefore all the more humiliating; reduced to supplicate where the knitted brow indicated that my case was already prejudged, and degraded in my own eyes by the interested motives prompting my submission. Happily, to subdue my inward reluctance came the recollection that I had offended—that, independently of the wound inflicted upon his vanity, I had shown an ungrateful obliviousness of much real kindness, and of his professions of regard for myself, stronger—yes, and that was the reason I undervalued it—stronger than that of any other in the family. Why had I so pertinaciously contemned, if not refused, the friendship offered me? By cherishing so slighting a view of his character and opinions, had I proved the superiority of my own? I could not think it; "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; hopeth all things," instead of leaping upon the judgment-seat in a hurry to condemn. Had I not dishonoured myself by giving way to temper and breaking the family concord, besides entailing upon my husband a bitter—aye, an undeserved—disappointment? At any cost to myself this must be prevented; but how? There could be no finessing with such a master of the art as the colonel, had I been disposed to try it. Straightforwardness, my most natural weapon, was also my best. There was nothing to be done but to open the subject without circumlocution. "Colonel," said I, "you are very angry with me, and I am not surprised at it." Externally, I was calm—perhaps too much so, as tears and wailings might have suited my purpose better. I could have shed them over Victor, but not over his uncle, reason, not feeling, being the motive-power at work, though it was but too sure that my heart throbbed heavily over the self-imposed task. "Do you not know that life has moments in which we are goaded to say things we do not even mean at the time, and bitterly regret afterwards? I wished for all to accompany you, and was vexed at hearing that the rest were to stay behind. Is it very blamable for a wife to desire the presence of her husband and children? I am willing to go without them if you will take me, only—only—" (changing the humble tone and attitude into which I had dropped, I now raised my head and looked directly at him) "only, if you will not have me, be just, let me pay the penalty of my fault, let it not be visited in any way upon Victor, who has ever been a good and dutiful nephew to you. Punish me, if you think it worth your while, but do not be unfair or unkind to him."

"I might answer that your proposition involves a contradiction, man and wife being one; but I would rather ask what you suppose is going to happen to Victor?" said the colonel.

Was it probable that I was mistaken—that he had not thought the cruel thought I was imputing to

him? Then not from me should he learn it; I would give no hint of the fears founded upon the coming of Mr. Stebbings, and thus perhaps put into his head an idea that did not exist. As Colonel Demarcay pointedly waited for an answer, I murmured something about his harshness to him the other evening, which elicited a sarcastic remark upon the soft, silken feelings so becoming to manhood. Angry, but not daring to show it, I kept down the rising ire, and, suffering the remark to pass unnoticed, began to think it would be better to go away. A prolonged interview might do more harm than good. "Will you remember that I am ready to go with you to Normandy or anywhere else whenever you wish it?" I said, taking a step nearer to him, and feeling rather meek and very penitent.

"And that you are willing to be punished instead of Victor," he answered.

Whether he was merely repeating the sense of my words, or in his heart putting some other meaning upon them, which I might discover to my cost by-and-by, I judged it best to be silent. Having failed in the attempt to come to a better understanding, feeling also that Victor might have needlessly taken alarm, and that any effort exerted to mollify the colonel, whether in the way of calm reasoning or by pathetic appeal, would be unavailing, I resigned myself to circumstances. They were too strong for me; the wavelet beating against the stone wall that had stood firm for years and years had an equal chance to make a softening impression. Had I not to deal with one hard and stern, and proud and unforgiving, who acknowledged no higher law than his own reason or judgment, or what was furnished by public opinion.

Alas! for the humanity that sinks to such a level! But the strongest motive of all to some characters could do nothing for me. In a matter so completely restricted within the family, public opinion had no influence. Mr. Stebbings arrived after I left the colonel. A bright-looking, broad-shouldered man, with a pair of wonderfully sharp eyes, got out of a fly and entered the hall as I was crossing it. In the one glance he cast on me as he passed, my person, dress—yes, I verily believe some traits of my character—were seized and understood. Though as good-looking as a middle-aged man could well be, the impression he made upon me was not altogether pleasing. Few are attracted towards the gaze that searches deep down into the recesses of thought, some secrets of which most of us would keep to ourselves. Whatever that keen scrutiny might gain from others, he gave nothing in return. Not a trace of his own feelings or impressions appeared on his countenance when he joined me in the drawing-room before luncheon; not a clue to his hour-and-a-half's conversation just concluded with the colonel, whether pleasant or otherwise. To me, as to Victor, whom he knew very well, he was equally talkative about a host of things in which neither of us at that moment took any interest, both being alike absorbed in trying to discover the reason of his sudden summons to Lornedale. Twice I caught his steely eyes, not looking at me as did other eyes, but rapidly darting their questioning light into my face, and as rapidly withdrawing them. He did this more frequently and just as stealthily when the children came in, Nora nestling up to me, and Hubert standing aloof, staring shyly at the stranger. At his first overtures Nora stole softly towards him and laid her little hand in his,

while her brother, with his accustomed slack obedience, though twice told by his father to shake hands with Mr. Stebbings, threw himself into a chair, first indulged in some self-invented exercises with his feet in the air, and then slowly did as he was bid.

Well was it for Hubert that his uncle was not present at this gymnastic exhibition, or his unmannerliness might have met with a severer punishment than the oft-merited reprimand. On the contrary, fortune favoured him, as he appeared to unusual advantage when the colonel entered, standing, with a blushing, beaming face and noble bearing, at Mr. Stebbings' knee, fascinated, it would seem, by the eagle glance of the man of law.

"Come, sir, be my staff to-day," and, to our surprise, Colonel Demarcey, instead of being hard or peevish with the child, laid his hand on Hubert's shoulder, and led the way into the dining-room. This unusual encouragement had the effect of subduing the boy entirely. Throughout the repast he scarcely said a word, and behaved so decorously that, contrary to custom, neither his uncle nor I had occasion to call him to order, and when the luncheon was over he took his sister by the hand and gravely led her out of the room. Poor Victor! how happy he looked when Mr. Stebbings complimented him upon his noble boy. What could possess me to volunteer the remark that Hubert only wanted a spirit of obedience to make him as noble as he appeared?—an observation not ill-intended, yet which brought upon me a keen glance from the steely eyes, and that detested bend from the colonel, which might be acquiescence in my opinion, or it might be a mockery of it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE peacefulness of the family aspect was changed at dinner-time. Coldly polite to me, and openly snappish to my husband, the colonel was in a very bad humour. It soon transpired that he had been making a fresh will, and, judging from appearances, it was likely to fare badly with Victor and me, unless, as we are told by an arch cynic, a man looks with peculiar dislike upon his heir. Whatever Colonel Demarcey's manner might bode for myself I did not care—the wealth surrounding me since I came to Lorndale had brought me no real enjoyment. I think now as I thought then, that "better is a dry morsel with quietness therewith than a house full of good cheer with strife." But I was not altogether a fair judge. Brought up as I had been, riches were by no means of paramount importance. Many scenes of happiness were easily recalled in which they did not figure; but to Victor it was otherwise. Allowed, if not taught, for many years to consider himself his uncle's heir, and, it may be said, having purchased the inheritance with his freedom, it would be a bitter fate to find himself deprived of it through some unexpected caprice, or by the fault of another. Yet this appeared but too likely to happen. Colonel Demarcey had made one will on the occasion of Victor's marriage, to which we knew he had since appended a codicil. What else but a complete change of ideas, produced probably by some revulsion of feeling, should induce him to make another? and what revulsion of feeling had come over him but that which had reference to me? From being the highest in his estimation I

had now descended to the lowest place. Victor was uneasy, so much so that he went to town the following morning, in order, as he privately informed me, to state his fears and suspicions to his own lawyer.

My best efforts to move the colonel had not succeeded, nor did I see my way to renew them at present. The next step contemplated was to see Mr. Stebbings, and try to interest him in our favour. The opportunity presented itself soon after my husband's departure. Knowing that Mr. Stebbings was in the library, waiting to be admitted to Colonel Demarcey's presence, I joined him, and, after paying him the compliment of supposing that he wished to promote the happiness and welfare of his clients, I expressed my desire to make him acquainted with a few circumstances which, as a friend of the family, he ought to know. Obviously there was no alacrity to listen, but when I seated myself, with an evident intention of being heard, he could do no less than put down the book he was turning over and give me his attention. Though not encouraged, I carried my point in a measure, and in order that the precious minutes might not be lost by prolixity, I abruptly alluded to a fact of which he was probably aware, that I had offended Colonel Demarcey, and, fearing he might retaliate by some unkindness to my husband, begged of him not to allow an injustice to be done without remonstrance. The sharp eyes were instantly upon me, taking in, as I easily perceived, no favourable impression.

"We lawyers obey instructions, we do not give them," he said, emphasising two words, which made his sentence almost reproachful.

"But you sometimes suggest what is most for your client's interest or honour, and to break a promise virtually made can neither avail the one nor advance the other."

"We are not conscience-keepers," was the unmoved rejoinder.

"You may remonstrate against injustice."

"When we see it. Do you not know, dear lady, that people's views of justice are like landscapes, coloured by the glass through which you look at them? What wears a rosy tint to you may be green or black to me."

"It would be injustice, a gross, crying injustice, to deprive my husband of an estate to which from his youth upwards he has been allowed to consider himself the heir," I cried out vehemently, losing all patience, and incensed at the cold demeanour of this man of business, where, as it seemed to me, all right thinking people must be stirred to some feeling of sympathy. "I have offended in a foolish, trifling way, unworthy of a man to resent. If forgiveness is not to be obtained at the hands of Colonel Demarcey, can no means be devised for punishing me alone? I only ask you to exercise your ingenuity, and suggest some way of meeting the emergency. I am not a woman spoilt by prosperity. I can bear more than many can."

Though surprised, either at my words or my eagerness, Mr. Stebbings yet maintained a provoking taciturnity, which, as is the usual effect, urged me on to say more. It was one of those occasions when the tongue slips away from the control of the judgment. It could do me no good, yet I talked on, and soon related the cause of my offence, the impatience into which I had been betrayed, and the displeasure of the colonel, brought upon me by the jealous officiousness of Grover. "Step-mothers are hardly

judged, especially by old servants," I observed, trying to put on a smile, which a sense of undeserved blame turned into a grimace, for on this point I was weak, and tears were just now near the surface. "It would be impossible for me to convince the children's nurse that I mean well by them."

"Do I understand you aright—you wish to accompany Colonel Demarcay?" said Mr. Stebbings.

"Wish—" With those eyes searching my inmost thoughts, I could not repeat the word without hesitation, for the motive that actuated me, the mean desire to secure the old man's money, was too despicable, and yet I was so situated that to act otherwise would be lending myself to a greater wrong.

"Wish it!" replied I, raising my head haughtily, that he might read my whole soul if he chose; reckless, too, of concealing the self-contempt that, in spite of the reasons assigned, sunk my heart with shame. "I wish it as a wife who would not furnish an excuse for doing an injury to her husband must wish it, in a self-interested, ignoble way, to which Colonel Demarcay ought never to have reduced me. It is degrading, humiliating, unendurable," I said, passionately, adding every similar epithet that came to my mind, provoked to the vehement protest by the impassive silence of my auditor. Just as I was beginning to perceive that my indignation only served to provide him with a subject for study, probably an anatomising of motive and effect, a messenger summoned Mr. Stebbings to wait upon the colonel, and when he appeared again it was only to receive a parting salutation, and the children were with me. From his manner no clue to the impression made upon him could be obtained, nor the view he took of what I had related. During the two days that followed his departure nothing fresh occurred, except that Patrick, having received from his master a command to stay at home, came to me in his trouble, requesting me to procure him the permission to attend the colonel.

"It is no easy matter to induce Colonel Demarcay to change his mind. Unable to help myself, I fear it is impossible to be of use to you. I wish to go with him, but he will not let me."

Patrick looked surprised, but he also looked distressed. I was half afraid that he was counting with regret the cost of the new service on which he had entered.

"Maybe I should not be able to do so much as Joseph, he being young and strong, but old Patrick would serve him better. I am getting pretty well again, and my heart is good. Tell the master so, please ma'am; I won't call myself his servant if he doesn't choose it," he added humbly; "and if he will let me go I will tell the other how he likes to have things done. I shall never live to see him again if he goes without me."

Utterly unable to comprehend that all my former influence had waned to nothing, Patrick would take no denial. If I would but promise to speak for him, he should be happy, for he knew that his master would not refuse me. The promise was given, but under protest. I warned him to build no hopes upon it; having so much to ask for myself, there was little chance of being of any material assistance to him. Before an opportunity presented itself the whole aspect of affairs at Lornedale was changed.

The evening of Victor's return home his uncle was seized with another attack of illness that at first threatened to prove serious. The preparations for

departure were suspended, and the household went about with hushed voices and silent footsteps. There is nothing like illness for abasing human pride and bringing us to recognise our dependence upon one another. Over the dark reefs of temper that lift themselves so ruggedly in ordinary life, flows then a tide of tenderness and sweet compassion, changing the surface of our mutual intercourse. We become pitiful and indulgent to the weak, and they, in their turn, more dependent, if not more considerate.

Such speedily became the state of feeling between me and the colonel. I could not see him suffer without making every effort to relieve him. Patrick by night and I by day, we were both installed in our old offices, and, to all appearance, restored to our former favour and regard. The grey stony eyes lighted up at my approach, and a look of ineffable content greeted me as I smoothed his pillow, prepared or administered his medicines, and gave directions in the sick chamber. The tones of my voice, the quietness of my movements, he said, soothed him, as did also the decision with which I enforced his doctor's orders. By tacit consent the past seemed forgotten by us both. The first allusion to it was from himself, the day he was able to leave his room.

"As soon as I get stronger we will start. Normandy is very healthy, it will do us good," he said, looking hard at me.

I assented.

"You will go with me, Ella?" he continued, in the same tone.

"Willingly."

A short silence followed, and then he whispered in my ear, "And the old will shall stand."

What could I think but that the interests of my husband and his children had been in jeopardy, and were now secured, and what more natural than that, in my joy at attaining the object of my sincere desire, I should thank him with an earnestness all the deeper for the anxiety we had undergone?

Our period of absence was indefinite, my companion uncongenial, my life out there far from enviable, yet a concatenation of circumstances had brought me to the dreary pass of hailing the tardy permission to go as a boon. Leaving Colonel Demarcay not less pleased than myself at the new arrangement, I had hastened to inform Victor of it. Was I wrong, was I unreasonable? Unprepared for his too visible gratification, it was as the last drop in a cup of bitters filled to overflowing.

"Thank you, Ella, thank you; you are indeed good to us," he said with effusion. "How can I ever repay you?" and taking my hand, he was holding it in a soft firm clasp, when I snatched it away with impetuosity.

"Anything but that; thanks from you are too cruel!" I cried with an hysterical gasp that sounded more like displeasure than sorrow. "I can bear the burden that comes to me from your uncle, but not from you." And waving my arms in the air, as if by that means it could be put aside, I fled from his presence up the stairs into my own room, where, casting myself down in a low chair, I fought against my grief with dry eyes and clenched hands. The very happiness of Victor's face aggravated me; that flush of joy with which he heard of my being permitted to accompany his uncle seemed impossible to forgive, and yet I knew it was occasioned by the removal of the fears he had lately entertained. The fortune I had just before been so anxious to secure

was hateful to me. What would it do for me when it passed into the hands of my husband? Would it draw him closer to me, or me to him? Would not life be always the same? I must be ever doing things I did not care much about, and looking on, as a cool outsider, ever interests which to other women are dear and sweet, constituting the very centre and essence of the home circle. During the next few days, principally spent in preparations for our departure, I continued to be very busy either with the colonel or my own arrangements; and when Victor and I were perchance thrown together, put on such a discouraging manner whenever he alluded to the journey, or else changed the subject so abruptly, that he soon learned to leave it where it was. I was going with his uncle; that was enough. The wistful looks he cast at me now and then, as he lingered about the room where I was, were purposely disregarded. I was resolved there should be no discussion. Of what avail was it to take the language of regret upon his lips, when all he could say amounted to no more than that he was sorry to give me trouble or put me to an inconvenience?

Patrick was going too, and more than happy in the prospect. Strongly beat the old love in that faithful

heart. It was touching to see how patiently he bore with his master's fretfulness, displayed on every trifling occasion; pathetic, too, to hear him excuse it. "If it does him good, I don't mind; indeed I rather like it. There is so little in my power to do for him, I am getting so old and useless, that it is pleasant to have something to put up with. He likes me best when he abuses me. I don't mind at all," he would say, with tears in his eyes.

To me the colonel was kinder than ever, evincing towards me a chivalrous tenderness that really seemed to assume the hue and colour of affection. Every now and then he would look earnestly into my face as if trying to read something that puzzled him. The lines of gravity so visible when I looked in the glass surprised me, yet they were not lines of care, only the tracings of a firm resolution to do the duty required of me. To him I was gentle, for pity was fast softening all my previous hardness. Was not his life waning darkly away, and many of its dearest avenues to enjoyment closed or closing? Sometimes it appeared as if he were not only afraid of opposing me, but desirous above all things to ingratiate himself in my favour. This second attack of illness had made him very dependent.

WILLIAM CAXTON.



ISTORY records no event in modern times more interesting or more important than the invention of the art of printing. Of all arts it is that which has conducted most to the spread of knowledge, and to the perpetuation not only of historical facts, but of the best thoughts of the human mind, and, consequently, to the education of the human race. When manuscripts were the sole records of man's thought and deed, many a noble deed and many a lofty thought were all but stillborn, because they found no record, or, if written down, passed, for the most part, into speedy oblivion. When the press came to supplement the pen, the entire conditions of thought and action became changed, and society, at least that section of society which thinks and acts, underwent a gradual but a sure and complete revolution. The advent of printing was, in fact, the dawn of a new day—the shining forth of a light never to be extinguished upon a world of intellectual and moral darkness. To the printer's art is owing more, infinitely more, than to any other material cause, that advance in civilisation among the Western nations, and that progress in arts, sciences, literature, and philosophy, which characterise the present period.

Many persons suppose that printing sprang into existence at once, taking the world, as it were, by storm. Nothing of the kind. Like all great inventions and discoveries, it had for a long time to grope in the dark and feel its way before it could fairly find a footing. The first attempts were simple and rude enough—the mere stamping of certain gro-

tesque marks or characters upon bales or packages of goods, to ensure their identification and point out their ownership. It may well have been this practice of stamping the goods of the merchant that suggested the cutting of rude pictures and passages of Scripture upon blocks of wood, impressions from which were common in Germany for a considerable time before printing with types began to be practised. Such impressions, when bound together, formed what are called "block books," some of which are still preserved, one of them, known as "Biblia Pauperum," or Book of the Poor, being well known to collectors. Again, there were playing-cards in use even before the block books, and though many makers of such cards produced them by a sort of stencilling process, it is pretty clear that vast numbers of them, manufactured in Venice, were faced with impressions from wood blocks. Further, there were in use for generations before Faust or Guttenberg appeared on the scene, small sheets or leaves bearing impressions from blocks, which set forth the simple elements of grammar, and these little manuals by Donatus were put into the hands of children at school. The first man, whoever he was (and that question is not likely to be settled), who conceived the idea of substituting movable characters instead of the solid block, he it was who really laid the foundation of printing, and may be fairly said to have invented the art. Whose was the original idea we do not know, but we do know that it was Guttenberg who first brought it to a practical issue, and he has reaped in reputation his merited reward.

But we are not going to write a history of printing. Our thoughts are busy with old Caxton, the first English printer, whose fourth centenary will be celebrated next month, and we want to give our readers as good an idea of the man—who he was, what he was, what he did, and how he did it—as we

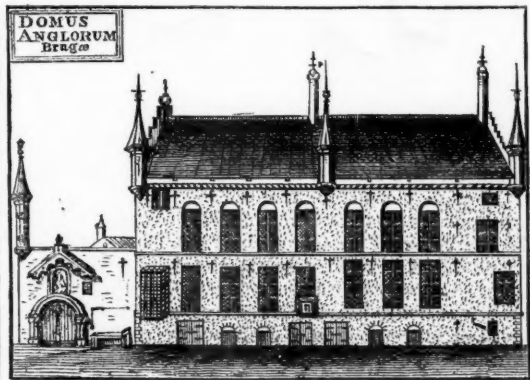
can do in the limited space allowed us, and with the means, all too scanty and rather doubtful as they are, at our command. "Show me a writer's book," says a certain critic, "and I will show you the writer." The biographers of Caxton have, as the above-quoted critic suggests, eliminated the character of Caxton from his books. We have no choice but to follow their example, selecting and condensing as we best may while briefly tracing the incidents of his useful and honourable career, premising that in the matter of dates some allowance must be made, looking to the general absence of any perfectly trustworthy authorities.

William Caxton was born about the year 1412, in the Weald of Kent, then a wild and somewhat savage district, where a barbarous dialect was spoken, and which was then practically as far from the influences of civilisation as Canada or Australia is now. But Caxton's parents knew the value of education, and contrived to send him to a tolerable school, where he seems to have had fair teaching, as well as good moral training. In after-life he was grateful for the kindness of his parents in this respect, expressing himself in one of his quaint prefaces as "bounden to pray for my father and mother's souls, that in my youth set me to school, by which, by the sufferance of God, I get my living I hope truly."

The father of Caxton was the proprietor of land in the Weald, or Wild, and having the means of furthering his son's fortune, apprenticed him, at the age of fifteen, to Robert Large, a mercer of the City of London, who afterwards became Lord Mayor. It is worth while to take a momentary glance at the London to which the young Caxton came in the year 1428. It was a city of some third of a million people, inhabiting wooden houses, closely crammed together; the streets not only wanting footways, but without pavement of any kind; without water, save such as was fetched from the river or the wells and springs by water-carriers or by the traders' apprentices; there was no police by day and no light by night, save such as came from the windows of dwellings; there were no theatres, for there was no drama; no concerts, no lectures, in short, no reasonable entertainment of any kind. It is true there were occasional "ridings" as they were called—that is, ceremonial processions, now trains of ecclesiastics, and now splendid shows of the nobility or the court. There were, at this date, no warlike triumphs, for the war was going on badly in France, where the Maid of Orleans had been turning the tables on the English, and had commenced that course of conquests which culminated in the loss of our possessions in France. By way of outdoor amusement, the populace were occasionally regaled with the spectacle of a Lollard or Wickliffite burned alive in Smithfield; of a delinquent losing his ears after a bout in the pillory; or of some summary execution on Tower Hill; or the baiting of bear or bull.

Caxton's apprenticeship endured, we are told, from his fifteenth or sixteenth to his twentieth year. He appears to have made good use of his time, and to have improved himself, while he fully satisfied his master, who at his death, in 1441, left him a legacy of twenty marks. At the expiration of his apprenticeship he became a citizen of London and freeman of the Company of Mercers. We know nothing of his doings at this period, but it is evident that he had gained by his conduct the goodwill of his townsmen and the members of his guild.

For some reason or other, which can only be guessed at, in 1441, or thereabouts, Caxton quitted England, and betook himself to the Low Countries, where he remained, according to his own account, for thirty years, "for the most part in the countries of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, and Zealand." It is vain to inquire what were his occupations during his first twenty years in the Netherlands; that they were in some way connected with commerce and the interests of the Mercers' Guild there is reason to suppose; but even that is only a conjecture, and nothing certain in regard to it is known. So there is a blank for us in those twenty years of Caxton's life—years which were of portentous interest to Englishmen, seeing that they embraced the rebellion of Jack Cade, and the whole of the sanguinary Wars of the Roses. It is clear, however, that though residing abroad, the reputation of Caxton stood high at home, for in 1464 Edward IV issued a writ appointing William Caxton and Richard Whitehill his special ambassadors and deputies to his cousin the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good. Caxton had now to attend the court at Bruges, and there, in the



THE HOUSE IN WHICH CAXTON LIVED AT BRUGES, 1468.

"House of the English" (*Domus Anglorum*), he is said to have resided for some years. It would appear that here his duties were not very onerous, and that he had much spare time on his hands; so, detesting laziness, he set about translating a French book written by Raoul le Fevre, an ecclesiastic with whom he had probably come in contact at court. Duke Philip died in 1467, and was succeeded by his son Charles, afterwards surnamed "the Rash." Within a year of his accession Charles married Margaret, the sister of the King of England, an event propitious to Caxton, who soon joined the establishment of the new Duchess of Burgundy, entering her service at a "yearly fee." It is evident that he was favoured by the duchess, who was probably prepossessed by his simple, straightforward, frank, and manly character. One day, while conversing with her on various matters, he happened to mention that he had begun a translation of Raoul le Fevre's "*Histoires de Troyes*," but that he had laid it aside, not being able to accomplish it to his satisfaction. Margaret desired to see the manuscript, and, having read it, commanded him to proceed with his undertaking, making at the same time some corrections, and giving him hints for the improvement of his style.

It is most interesting to trace the birth and his-

tory of this book, in some respects the most notable of all books, seeing that it is the first book that ever was printed in the English language, and that both author and printer was England's first printer, William Caxton. Eager to carry out the commands of his honoured mistress, Caxton immediately resumed the work of translation; but he had not now



FROM THE "GAME OF CHESS." A PAWN.

so much spare time on his hands, having the duties of English consul to perform, as well as various functions connected with his service at court. When the court moved to Ghent in 1469, he accompanied it, and made some further progress in the translation during his stay in that city; but the whole of the work was not finished until the year 1471—the third book, or latter portion of it, being done at Cologne, whither Caxton had removed to escape the turmoil attendant on the war which had then lately broken out between Louis XI and the Duke of Burgundy. In the epilogue to the second book, we read that the translation was begun at Bruges in 1469, was continued at Ghent in 1470, and finished at Cologne in 1471; where, also, in the same year he began and finished the third book, which completes the work. Doubtless, while writing his book, he made up his mind to avail himself of the art of printing, and thus perpetuate his labours by the multiplication of copies; and, further, he had resolved to print it himself, looking forward, we may well suppose, to the day when he should carry the printer's art to his native country. There was then residing at Bruges, and exercising the printer's craft, the Frenchman, Colard Mansion, a name destined to become famous among bibliopoles. To him, it is affirmed, Caxton applied for instruction in the art, and, backed, as he must have been, by court influence, he probably experienced no great difficulty in obtaining what he asked. Be that as it may, it is certain that the English translation of the "Histoires de Troye" was printed by Caxton at Bruges in 1471, the same year in which the manuscript was completed. Considerable activity must have been exercised, looking to the then state of the art, to get so large a work (nearly 700 pages) through the press in the space of little over three months. The title of this memorable book, which marks an epoch in history, occupies a whole page, is

printed in red ink, and runs as follows:—"Here begynneth the volume intituled and named the Recuyell of the histories of Troye, composed and drawn out of diuerse bookes of latyn into frenshe by the right venerable persone and worshipfull man Raoul le Ffevre, preest and chapelayn unto the right noble, glorious and myghty prince in his tyme Philip, duc of Bourgoyne, of Braband, etc. in the yere of the incarnation of our Lord God a thousand foure honderd sixty and foure, and translated and drawn out of frenshe into englishe by Willyam Caxton, mercer of the cyte of London, at the commandement of the right hie mighty and vertuous pryncesse hys redoubted lady Margarete, by the grace of God, duchesse of Bourgoyne, of Lotryk, of Braband, etc. whych sayd translacion and werke was begonne in Brugis, in the countee of Fflaundes, the first day of March the yere of the incarnation of our sayd Lord God a thousand foure honderd sixty and eyghte, and ended and fynished in the holy cyte of Colen, the xix day of septembre the yere of our sayd Lord God a thousand four hundred sixty and enleven."

There are but few copies of the "Recuyell of the Histories of Troye" now in existence, and those, with the single exception of some odd leaves in the French National Library, are all in England. One fine copy, containing an autograph of the queen of Edward IV, and supposed to have been presented to her by Caxton himself, was sold in the year 1812 for a thousand guineas. Caxton's own account of this, his first production, is given as an epilogue to



OLD PRINTING-PRESS. 1520.

the third book, and is charmingly characteristic of the man. "Thus ende I this boke," he says,

"whyche I have translated after myn auctor as nyghe as God hath gyven me connyng, to whom be gyven the laud and preysing. And for as moche as in the wryting of the same my penne is worn, myn hande very and not stedfast, myn eyen dimed with overmoche loking on the whyt paper, and my corage not so prone and redy to laboure as hit hath been, and that age crepeth on me dayly and feebleth all the bodye, and also because I have promysed to dyverce gentilmen and to my frendes to adresse to hem as hastily as I myght this sayd book; therefor I have practysed and lerned at my grete charge and dispense to ordeyne this sayd book in prynte after the maner and forme as ye may here see, and is not wretton with penne and ynke as other bokes ben, to thende that every man may have hem attones, ffor



CAXTON'S HOUSE IN WESTMINSTER.

all the books of this story, named the Recule of the histories of Troye, thus enprynted as ye here see, were begonne in oon day, and also fynyshid in oon day." Caxton does not mean to say here that all the books were begun and finished in one and the same day, as some simple persons have imagined, but that all the several copies of the book (some three hundred, probably) were begun on one day, and finished on one other day, so that when one copy was completed all were completed. We know that at this date he was only in his sixtieth year, and it seems rather odd that he should complain pathetically of age and feebleness when he was just beginning the career that was to ensure him a perennial reputation, and had nearly twenty years of arduous and prosperous labours before him; but the fact is, in uttering such plaintive murmurs he was but following the fashion of the times, and of times long anterior.

Once successful as a printer, it was impossible for Caxton to do otherwise than devote himself to the art. With the countenance, and, as we may fairly

infer, with the assistance of the Duchess of Burgundy, he made use of his materials (or her materials) in printing other books then in demand. One of his first speculations, if not the very first, was the "Game of Chess," which, like the "Historyes of Troye," was a translation of his own from the French, and which he states was "fynysshed the last day of marche the yer of our Lord God a thousand four honderd and lxxiiij." This is at present the rarest of his books, and the only copies of it in existence are in this country. The "Game of Chess" was followed by various other works, though what were the titles of them we do not care to specify, seeing there has been so much disagreement (and no little squabbling) on the question, which most of the biographers seem to have settled entirely to their own satisfaction, if not to that of any one besides. Enough that Caxton carried on the business of a printer in the Low Countries for several years, and that, during a part of the time, at least, he sold in the city of Bruges the productions of his press.

The date of Caxton's return to England, furnished with types and the numerous materials that were necessary for establishing himself as a printer in London, cannot be exactly determined. He probably arrived here some time in 1476; but he must have had a great deal to do, and no trifling difficulties to encounter, before he was in a condition to set to work. There were no workmen in England to whom he could look for efficient aid—none, at any rate, sufficiently skilled to engrave the punches and cast the metal types, or who could make a press fit for working. All his materials, therefore, he had to bring with him, and we may be pretty sure that he



LORD RIVERS PRESENTING HIS BOOK, "DICTES AND NOTABLE SAYINGES OF PHYLOSOPHERS."

brought over also a sufficient staff of experienced workmen, both compositors and pressmen, for he would have found it quite impossible to train the English artisans of that day, not one in fifty of whom could read or write, to the work he was engaged in. The type he used in England was made, it would appear, in Germany, and it differs materially in character from that of his books printed abroad. Of his presses we can form some pretty adequate idea from the rude engravings of them which have come

down to us. They very much resembled the clothes-presses of a later day, and we learn from the recorded experience of a man who endeavoured in vain to set up a printing-house in England, that, in his case at least, they were mere modifications of the Continental wine-presses. The press of Caxton is tolerably represented in our engraving, and must have been but a rude machine, requiring to be worked with watchful care and deliberation. It was not until long after Caxton's time that the Dutchman Blaew improved the press so far as to allow of its being worked at the rate of two or three hundred copies an hour. It is likely that fifty or sixty copies an hour was as much as could be done with the original press.

The first care of Caxton in coming to England, we have small doubt, was to find safe harbourage for himself and his undertaking. He must have been well aware of the dislike of English workmen for foreigners, and must have felt that his design would be completely frustrated if his Flemish operatives were once brought into hostile collision with the London roughs. This was the motive, we imagine, that led him to apply for quarters in Westminster Abbey, where, whatever else might happen, he would be secure from disturbance by a mob. His application to Abbot Esteney was in all likelihood backed by recommendations which would ensure him favourable consideration. At any rate, his request was complied with, and he was allowed the accommodation he wanted—if not in the abbey itself, yet in its immediate proximity. Dean Stanley reminds us that the expression, "Westminster Abbey," was at that time a much more extensive expression than it is now, and meant not merely the church, but the whole precincts, which embraced a large circumference round the sacred edifice. It was probably in the Almonry that Caxton set up his press, in a house which stood over against Saint Ann's Chapel, in which chapel it is supposed certain printing materials were stored, while it served as an occasional meeting-place for the workmen. Caxton's house, like other business houses at the time, bore a sign by way of distinguishing mark. His sign was the Red Pale (or Pole), as we know from an advertisement of his, a copy of which is still preserved at Oxford, and which runs thus: "If it please any man spirituel or temporel to vye on pyes of two and three comemoracions of Salisburi use, enpyntid after the forme of this present lettre, whiche ben wel and truly correct, late hym come to Westminster in to the almonesrye at the reed pale, and he shal have them good chepe. Supplico stet cedula."

It is now pretty generally admitted that the first book printed by Caxton in England was a production of Lord Rivers, one of the printer's earliest patrons, entitled "The Dictes and notable wyse Sayinges of the Phylosophers," which bears the date of 1477, and thus settles, as near as it can now be settled, the much-debated question of the time of his establishment as a printer in England. In the preparation of this work Caxton is said to have assisted his noble patron by translating a certain portion of it and revising the whole. A copy of the work was presented to King Edward iv., and there is in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth a manuscript copy in French, richly illuminated, one of the illuminations representing the presentation, from which picture our engraving is taken, where the man kneeling by the side of the earl is held to be the printer of the book. For some fifteen years after the above date Caxton

continued his typographical labours, which consisted in good part of the publication of translations of French books made by himself. Among the earliest, however, were two other books by the unfortunate Lord Rivers, "The Moral Proverbs of Christine de Pise," and the book named "Cordial." The luckless lord was but thirty-six when he wrote the last-named work, and three years after he was foully put to death by Richard iii., on a false charge of treason.

We cannot enter into details with regard to the numerous publications which issued from Caxton's press during the remainder of his life. They could hardly have fallen much short of a hundred in number; but it is impossible to say how many they really were, or what was the exact order of their appearance. We must limit ourselves to noticing some of the most remarkable. In 1480 appeared "The Chronicles of England," a narrative of events from the fabulous period before the Romans down to the time of Edward iv. In the same year appeared "The Description of Britain," telling of the extent of the island, its towns, cities, marvels, etc. The following may serve as a specimen of the style of this then very useful book: "At Stonehinge beside Salisbury there be great stones and wondrous huge; and be reared on high, as it were gates set upon other gates; nevertheless it is not known clearly nor appereived how and wherefore they be so areared and so wonderful hanged." Then, by way of helping his countrymen to a knowledge of other countries, he published, in 1482, "The Polychronicon," the author of which was a monk of Chester, and which was done into English about the time of Edward iii., by John de Trevisa, Caxton modernising the English that it might be the better understood. "The Image of the Mirroure of the World" was one of his

Grammyre.



FROM THE "MIRROUR OF THE WORLD."

own translations from the French, in which there is an account of the seven liberal arts—how nature worketh, and how the earth holdeth him right in the middle of the world—with an account, in conclusion, of the celestial paradise; the work is further adorned with cuts, "without which," he says, "it may not be lightly understood." One of the most popular of the translations was "The History of Reynard the Fox," which was composed in the twelfth century by some unknown genius, and is popular to the present hour. "The Subtil History and Fables of Esop," another

of Caxton's translations, appeared in 1483; at the end of the fables the translator appends a story of his own, admirable for its humour and simplicity, as well as for its doctrinal value, but too lengthy for insertion here. Perhaps the most remarkable of Caxton's books was "The Golden Legend," printed in double columns, and containing between four and five hundred pages largely illustrated with woodcuts, a work which, prudent man as he was, he was only induced to undertake on being guaranteed the sale of a reasonable number of copies, and a yearly dole of venison in addition. Before this elaborate work appeared, as we learn from the prologue, he had printed a translation of "Ovid's Metamorphoses," of which there is now no copy known to exist. Other works of a classical kind were "The Book of Tully of Old Age," and "Tullius, his Book of Friendship," with which may be mentioned "The Book of Eneydos," a sort of historical narrative founded on the epic of Virgil. The book "Cathon" seems to have been a favourite of Caxton's, "for, in my judgment," he says, "it is the best book for to be taught to young children in schools, and also to people of every age it is full convenient if it be well understanden." Being a great admirer of Chaucer, Caxton printed "The Canterbury Tales," and on finding afterwards that the copy which he had used was incorrect, he procured, with no small trouble, a correct copy, and printed the whole over again. He raised, at his own expense, a memorial to Chaucer in Westminster Abbey, bearing an inscription in honour of the poet, whom, in one of his prefaces, he styles "the worshipful fader and first founder and embellisher of ornate eloquence in English." After the publication of the poems of Chaucer came "The Confessio Amantis" of Gower, a contemporary of Chaucer, who is now much less known to English readers. These books, having never been in print before, must have required careful collation and preparation, and probably cost as much pains, or more, than he bestowed on a translation of his own.

It has been objected to Caxton by many that he printed so few religious books; and Gibbon, the historian, taunts him with complying with the vicious tastes of his readers, gratifying the nobles with treatises on heraldry, hawking, and the game of chess, and amusing the popular credulity with romances of famous knights and legends of more fabulous saints. The objection is not well founded, for, in fact, Caxton did print a number of religious books, and probably quite as many as he could dispose of. The very limited catalogue of his works in the British Museum contains the titles of some dozen or more books of a moral or religious kind; and we are justified in believing, from the general tenour of his life, that he went as far in this direction as he prudently could. One of his biographers, the Rev. Mr. Lewis, says of him, "He expressed a great sense of religion, and wrote like one that lived in the fear of God, and was very desirous of promoting his honour and glory;" and it is impossible to read Caxton's repeated expressions of his own mind and feeling without endorsing this opinion of his biographer. We see the frank-hearted and always free-speaking man constantly, whenever he had any project in hand, committing the undertaking to the Divine guidance—often putting up a simple prayer that he may be enabled to bring the work to a good end, "to the honour and glory of Almighty God." It is quite true that he did print a considerable

number of books of the chivalrous, heroic, and romantic kind, and he shows, moreover, by the selections he made, and by his remarks concerning them, that he had a genuine taste, a true Englishman's liking, for feats of chivalry and dauntless daring, as well as for the details of courtly splendour and luxurious display; and we only say that, for our part, we like him none the worse for that. In judging him, however, we are bound to take into consideration the facts of his position. He was in favour with many of the frequenters of the court; they were his first patrons and his best, and the constant encouragers of his unwearied industry, and he naturally consulted their taste and wishes, and supplied them with such books as they would approve and pay for; if he had not done so he would certainly have forfeited their favour, and perhaps have lapsed into poverty. How was it, many have asked, that Caxton, the first English printer, did not print the Bible? The question is a pertinent one, seeing that England was then without the Bible, and that on the Continent the printing of the Bible had been going on from the first discovery of the art, and had produced most important results. The answer, however, is not far to seek. The Bible at that particular period could not be safely printed by any one in England. Caxton knew the feeling of the priesthood on this subject quite well. Before he left England—while he was a mercer in the City—he had seen, or he might have seen, Lollards and Wickliffites burned at the stake in Smithfield, and noble ladies doing penance in white sheets, for offences ecclesiastical. He knew that the promulgation of Wickliffe's Bible was prohibited by law; and though there were other manuscripts of the Scriptures in being, it was impossible for him or any one else to be certain that these were not made up in part from Wickliffe's version; so that to print any one of them was to run the risk of a prosecution that might lead to imprisonment, if not to death.

One of the last works upon which Caxton was engaged was entitled "The Art and Craft to know well how to die," the translation of which from the French he finished on the 15th of June, 1490. The book begins abruptly, plunging at once into the very marrow of the subject: "When it is so," says the writer, "that what a man maketh or doeth it is made to come to some end, and if the thing be good and well made it must needs come to some good end; then by better and greater reason every man ought to intend in such wise to live in this world, in keeping the commandments of God, that he may come to a good end. And then out of this world, full of wretchedness and tribulations, he may go to heaven unto God and his saints, unto joy perdurable." At this time the persevering old printer, who had printed some 18,000 pages, of which he had himself written several thousands, was verging towards fourscore, and in this year he buried a relative, Maude Caxton, whom it has been conjectured was his wife. At the close of the following year he had fulfilled the work allotted him to do, and was peacefully gathered to his rest. This date of Caxton's death, says Mr. Blades, is confirmed by a manuscript quoted by Ames: "There is wrote down in a very old hand in a *Fruetus Temporum* of my friend Mr. Ballard of Cambden in Gloucestershire, 'Of your charitee pray for the soul of Mayster Wyllyam Caxton, that in hys time was a man of moche ornate and moche renomme wysdome and connyng and

decessed ful chrystenly, the yere of our lord
mccccxxxj. Moder of Merci shyld hym fro
thorribul fynd, and bryng hym to lyff eternall that
never hath ynd.' " In the churchwardens' account
of the parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, for the
year 1492, there is the following entry:—

"Item; atte bureyng of William
Caxton for iiij torches . . . vj^s viii^d
Item; for the belle at same bu-
reyng vj^d."

Before taking leave of William Caxton, we must, in justice to his memory, refer to the attempt which was made on the part of one Richard Atkins, some two hundred years ago, to deprive Caxton of the honour of being the first English printer. Atkins pretended to have received from a friend, whose name he does not mention, a copy of an ancient manuscript chronicle existing in the library of the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth, containing, he affirms, details to the following effect: Thomas Bourchiers, Archbishop of Canterbury, having persuaded King Henry vi to employ all available means to introduce the art of printing, then practised at Haarlem, into England, the king charged his valet-de-chambre, Robert Turner, with a secret mission, directing him to corrupt and seduce one of the Haarlem workmen and convey him into Great Britain. Turner, says the supposed chronicle, associated himself with Caxton, a rich merchant of London, who had wealthy relatives in Holland, and whose residence there would not be likely to excite suspicion. They first went to Amsterdam, then to Leyden, not venturing at once to Haarlem on account of the rigour with which all strangers were watched, and hearing, moreover, that several persons had already been cast into prison on the mere suspicion of spying into the mystery of printing. After a considerable time, by the lavish use of money they succeeded in seducing a certain workman named Frederick Corsellis, whom they brought away with them to London, from whence he was taken to Oxford, and set to work under vigilant watch and ward to prevent his absconding. Therefore, says Atkins, Oxford is the first town in England where printing was practised, etc., etc. By means of this absurd fable, in which truth and falsehood are oddly mingled together, Atkins endeavoured to prove that the right of printing depended on the crown of England. He took

care, however, not to produce the ancient manuscript chronicle which he quoted as his authority, nor could any such document be discovered by the most rigorous search in the archives of Lambeth Palace. What caused Atkins's story to be believed by many was that he produced a book, "Expositio Sancti Jeronimi, ad Papam Laurentiam," printed at Oxford, and bearing the date of 1468; but it was afterwards shown by Dr. Middleton, in his "Dissertation upon the Origin of Printing," that the date was incorrect, being the result of a mistake of the printer, easily accounted for, as Mr. Knight properly observes, by the accidental omission of an x in the Roman numerals. Middleton has no scruple in declaring that the alleged ancient manuscript chronicle was an invention of Atkins, and it seems likely that he had recourse to it partly to further his own interest, and partly to avenge himself on the London booksellers, with whom he had a standing quarrel. But there is stronger testimony against the truth of Atkins's story in the silence of Caxton himself regarding every detail of it. Caxton, as we have seen, was the very reverse of a reticent man; he is always frank and outspoken, and even a little garrulous, and his life and actions were ever open to his friends and the public; and yet he never says a word about this supposed secret mission. Further, in his supplement to the "Polychronicon" he attributes the honour of the invention of printing, not to the city of Haarlem, which it is not clear that he ever visited, but to the town of Mayence, to which, doubtless, it was rightly due. If Caxton had at any time been employed by King Henry vi, looking to his courtly proclivities, we may be quite sure he would have prized the honour, and would have duly recorded the fact. He was employed by Edward iv, though what was the nature of his services to that monarch we can only guess; but he lets us know that the king sent him thirty pounds in acknowledgment for them, a sum which was equivalent to between three and four hundred pounds of our present money. It is curious to observe how tenacious of life are misrepresentation and falsehood; there are not wanting even in our day writers who uphold as true the fable of Atkins, and tell us that Corsellis, and not Caxton, was the first English printer, forgetting, or losing sight of the fact, that all they have to produce in the face of Caxton's voluminous publications is that single volume with a date shown to be erroneous.

SPECIMEN OF CAXTON'S TYPOGRAPHY.

1 *Une vraye penitance est comme aucune eschielle
par laquelle l'omme pecheur qui selon la parabole
de l'euangille descend de Jherusalem en Jherico*

The Printers' Pension, Almshouse, and Orphan Asylum Corporation, which began its most useful career just fifty years ago, will hold its jubilee festival during the celebration of the Caxton centenary. This institution has for its object the amelioration of the lot of the working printer; it grants pensions to compositors and pressmen incapacitated through age or infirmity; it provides a comfortable home for the solitary and friendless man when he is no longer able to work; it offers the same asylum to working printers' widows, and it adopts and educates his orphan children when there is no other

friend to whom they can look for protection. There are at the present time upwards of a hundred pensioners on the funds, to whom, as we see from the last published report, some £1,500 was distributed within the year. During the same period all the apartments in the Almshouse in Wood Green were fully occupied, and £338 was expended on behalf of the inmates. Seven orphans at the same time were located in the Asylum, where they are carefully educated and trained to industry, and their welfare is cared for after they have passed from the immediate control of their guardians.

It is intended that the Caxton Celebration shall be rendered subsidiary to the benevolent action of the above institution. That is just as it should be, and is probably the very thing the brave old Westminster printer would have wished if he could have been consulted in the matter. We trust the fruits of the celebration will be solid and substantial, and we are justified in expecting they will be so when we consider the attractions of the exhibition at Stationers' Hall. The collection there assembled will be the most interesting, and by far the most instructive as regards the subject of printing, that has ever been offered to public view. It will be nothing short of a material history of printing, and will convey more information to a moderately careful observer than he would be able to derive from all the books which have been written on the typographic art. If the general curiosity is awakened in any degree at all proportioned to the importance of the subject, the attendance of the public will be large indeed, and the funds of the Printers' Pension Corporation will be materially augmented. Few institutions of a benevolent kind, if, indeed, any, have such valid claims on society at large. It is true, as has been well said by Sir Charles Reed, that "there is no other class in the country who do so much for the public, and, at the same time, so little for themselves. . . . Printers, to use a phrase well understood among themselves, at the best have 'hard lines' of it. Theirs is a work which brings into play, not the skilled labour of the hand alone, but the high faculties of the mind; their work is not a work of the day only, but they are found toiling at the midnight hour, and often into the small hours of the morning, to gratify the public taste and to

elevate the intellectual and moral standard of the entire community. In doing this they expend the bone, the muscle, and the fibre of the physical frame, and they draw so largely upon their mental powers that they almost necessarily reduce the amount of vital energy, and render themselves more assailable by distemper and disease, falling victims often at an early period of life to the labour they have undergone." This picture is far from overdrawn; indeed, as the writer knows full well, it comes far short of the actual fact, the fact being that in cases of urgency there is no limit to the labours of the journeyman printer other than his physical powers of endurance—so long as he can stand on his feet, or keep his eyes open, he works on. In truth, he is compelled to do so, owing to the conditions under which his labours have to be pursued. As a consequence, men often succumb to disease or infirmity before they have had sufficient opportunity to make any provision for the future of those dependent upon them. It is for workers thus situated that the institution for which we would plead was established, and during the last half-century it has been helpful to numbers of the afflicted and bereaved. Unhappily, however, these numbers are continually increasing in a ratio considerably beyond the increase of the funds applicable to their relief. What is wanted is a wider recognition on the part of all who read of the claims of those whose life-work it is to minister to their gratification. Let us hope that the year 1877 may be made memorable to working printers and their well-wishers, not only as the year of the Caxton celebration, but also as the year in which the Printers' Pension Corporation was enabled largely to extend its benevolent action.

CUCKOO LORE.



THE North American Indians have a beautiful myth, says Hugh Macmillan, in his charming book, "The Sabbath of the Fields," concerning a mystical bird that, coming in the summer evenings when the moon is full, sings in the pine groves beside their wigwams ethereal songs of the spirit-land, bringing tidings of departed friends. "May we not," he adds, "look upon the cuckoo as our

mystical bird which comes to us when the year is at its full, greatest in beauty and brightest in bloom, to speak to us of the land that is very far off, and of the loved and lost ones who dwell in it? But a brief season it stays with us. It vanishes with the bloom of the year; and its last note in departure gives expression, as it were, to what the fading of the spring flowers and the soberer green of the wood-

lands silently proclaim." According to the Gloucestershire peasant—

"The cuckoo comes in April,
Sings a song in May;
Then in June another tune,
And then she flies away."

It is, indeed, no doubt, because this strange mysterious little harbinger of spring comes amongst us to announce its joyous heaven-sent message—telling how the dreary winter is past and the bright sunny days of summer nigh at hand—that he has been so gladly welcomed in all times, and even acquired a superstitious reverence.

The cry of cuckoo is the note of the male only, that of the female being a "harsh, screaming chatter." "The custom," says a writer* on the subject, "of calling the bird 'she' is, however, everywhere persisted in, at any rate amongst the uneducated." And in the many popular rhymes this peculiarity may be noticed.

In some parts of the country it is the popular notion that the 21st of April is the day on which the cuckoo makes its first appearance; and at Tenbury, in Worcestershire, it is a belief that it is never heard till Tenbury fair-day (April 20th), or after Pershore fair-day (June 26th). In Wales it is considered unlucky to hear the cuckoo before the 6th of April, but "you will have prosperity," is the common saying, "for the whole of the year if you first hear it on the 28th." According to some the 14th of April is the time when the cuckoo's note is first heard, and many are the anxious ears that eagerly listen for it, as much significance is attached to this event. Thus, in the north of England, it is regarded as an unfortunate omen for any one to have no money in his pocket when he hears the cuckoo for the first time in a season, and much care is taken to avoid such an occurrence. In Norfolk it is a wide-spread superstition that whatever you are doing when you first hear the cuckoo, that you will do most frequently all the year.† It was formerly a very common belief that if a young woman ran into the fields early in the morning to hear the cuckoo, and, as soon as she heard it, took off her left shoe and looked into it, she would there find a man's hair of exactly the same colour as that of her future husband. In the "Connoisseur" an allusion is made to this custom. "I got up last May morning and went into the fields to hear the cuckoo, and when I pulled off my left shoe I found a hair in it exactly the same colour with his." Gay, too, in his "Shepherd's Week" (4th Pastoral), speaks of it:—

"When first the year I heard the cuckoo sing,
And call with welcome note the budding spring,
I straightway set a running with such haste,
Deb'rah that ran the smock scarce ran so fast.
Till spent for lack of breath, quite weary grown,
Upon a rising bank I sat adown,
And doff'd my shoe, and by my troth I swear,
Therein I spied this yellow frizzled hair,
As like to Lubberkin's in curl and hue,
As if upon his comely pate it grew."

Cornishmen regard it as a good omen to hear the first cuckoo from the right and from before them; when heard, however, from the left it is a sign of ill-luck. In England, as well as in Germany, it is a

belief among the peasantry that the cuckoo, if asked, will tell you by the repetitions of his cry how many years you have to live. Hence the rhyme:—

"Cuckoo, cherry-tree,
Good bird, tell me
How many years have I to live."

Kelly, in his "Indo-European Tradition and Folklore," ascribes the allusion to the cherry-tree, in this and similar rhymes, to the superstition that before the cuckoo ceases his song he must eat three good meals of cherries.

In Shropshire it was customary for the labouring classes, as soon as they heard the first cuckoo, to leave off work, and to devote the rest of the day to merry-making, which went by the name of the "Cuckoo ale."

The cuckoo rhymes vary in different counties, and nearly all agree as to the time of its arrival, although they differ somewhat as to the date of its departure. The following well-known rhyme is sung in many places:—

"In April
The cuckoo shows his bill;
In May
He is singing all day;
In June
He changes his tune;
In July
He prepares to fly;
In August
Fly he must."

In Sussex, says a correspondent of the "Athenæum," there is a further addition:—

"If he stay until September,
'Tis as much as the oldest man
Can remember."

In the allusion above to the change which takes place in the cuckoo's cry, it should be noted, remarks a writer in Mary Howitt's "Pictorial Calendar of the Seasons," that its syllabled note is prolonged to *cuc-cuckoo*, and not unfrequently ends in a mere repetition of the first syllable, *cuc, cuc, cuc*. It is then about to comply with the request so pathetically urged by Chaucer:—

"Now, good Cuckowe, goe somewhere away."

In Derbyshire one rhyme very prevalent is as follows:—

"The cuckoo is a merry bird,
She sings as she flies;
She brings us good tidings,
And tells us no lies.
She sucks little birds' eggs,
To make her voice clear,
That she may sing cuckoo
Three months in the year."

Among the Danes a curious custom is found in connection with the cuckoo. As soon as its voice is heard in the woods, every village girl kisses her hand, and asks the question, "Cuckoo, cuckoo! when shall I be married?" The Swedes have a similar superstition, and many a peasant girl exclaims, "Cuckoo grey, tell to me, up in the tree true and free, how many years I must live and go unmarried."

In some parts the following proverb is much used:—

* See Howitt's "Pictorial Calendar of the Seasons."

† "Notes and Queries," 2nd S. vol. i. p. 523.

"Cuckoo oats and woodcock hay
Make a farmer run away."

This phrase, says a correspondent of "Notes and Queries" (3rd S. vol. v. p. 450), means that if the spring is so backward that the oats cannot be sown till the cuckoo is heard, or the autumn so wet that the latter-math crop of hay cannot be got in till the woodcocks come over, the farmer is sure to suffer great loss. In Norfolk, too, one may frequently hear the poorer classes quoting the subjoined rhyme with reference to their agricultural pursuits:—

"When the wehling shrieks at night,
Sow the seed with the morning light;
But 'ware when the cuckoo swells its throat,
Harvest flies from the mooncall's* note."

"When the cuckoo purls its feathers, the housewife should become chary of her eggs," is a popular saying in many parts of the country. In Wales the cuckoo often goes by the name of "the Welsh ambassador." In Middleton's "A Trick to Catch the Old One" (act iv., scene 5), Dampet says:—

"Why, thou rogue of universality, do I not know thee? This sound is like the cuckoo, the Welsh ambassador."

It has been suggested† that the cuckoo is called by this name in allusion to the annual arrival of Welshmen in search of summer and other employment. As those wanderers might have entered England about the time of the cuckoo's appearance, the idea that the bird was the precursor of the Welsh might thus become prevalent.

In Scotland it is considered lucky to be walking when one first hears the cuckoo, and the peasants are accustomed to say:—

"Gang and hear the gowk yell,
Sit and see the swallow flee,
See the foal before its mother's 'ee,
'Twill be a thriving year wi' thee."

In conclusion, we must not omit to mention the following admirable piece of advice contained in the old Welsh proverb: "When thou hearest the cuckoo cry, take timely heed to thy ways; for it may be that he warns thee to a straighter line of duty."

THE ROYAL ACADEMY CATALOGUE.

IN an article in May of last year we gave some account of the history of the Royal Academy, with notices of its early exhibitions. A sentence was there quoted from Dr. Johnson's "Preface to the Artists' Catalogue for 1762." The whole of this preface is worthy of being reproduced. Artists, and the patrons of art, will be amused by the plan then adopted for the sale and purchase of pictures.

The public may justly require to be informed of the nature and extent of every design, for which the favour of the public is openly solicited. The artists, who were themselves the first projectors of an exhibition in this nation, and who have now contributed to the following catalogue, think it therefore necessary to explain their purpose, and justify their conduct.

* Probably the nightingale.

† See "Notes and Queries," 1st S. vol. i. p. 419.

An exhibition of the works of art, being a spectacle new in this kingdom, has raised various opinions and conjectures among those who are unacquainted with the practice in foreign nations. Those who set out their performances to general view, have been too often considered as the rivals of each other, as men actuated, if not by avarice, at least by vanity, and contending for superiority of fame, though not for a pecuniary prize. It cannot be denied or doubted, that all who offer themselves to criticism are desirous of praise; this desire is not only innocent, but virtuous, while it is undebaased by artifice, and unpolluted by envy; and of envy or artifice these men can never be accused, who, already enjoying all the honours and profits of their profession, are content to stand candidates for public notice, with genius yet unexperienced, and diligence yet unrewarded; who, without any hope of increasing their own reputation or interest, expose their names and their works only that they may furnish an opportunity of appearance to the young, the diffident, and the neglected.

The purpose of this exhibition is not to enrich the artists, but to advance the art; the eminent are not flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve public favour, is here invited to display his merit.

Of the price put upon this exhibition some account may be demanded. Whoever sets his work to be shewn, naturally desires a multitude of spectators; but his desire defeats its own end, when spectators assemble in such numbers as to obstruct one another. Though we are far from wishing to diminish the pleasures, or depreciate the sentiments of any class of the community, we know, however, what every one knows, that all cannot be judges or purchasers of works of arts; yet we have already found by experience, that all are desirous to see an exhibition. When the terms of admission were low, our room was thronged with such multitudes as made access dangerous, and frightened away those whose approbation was most desired.

Yet, because it is seldom believed that money is got but for the love of money, we shall tell the use which we intend to make of our expected profits.

Many artists of great abilities are unable to sell their works for their due price; to remove this inconvenience, an annual sale will be appointed, to which every man may send his works, and send them if he will without his name. These works will be reviewed by the committee that conduct the exhibition. A price will be secretly set on every piece, and registered by the secretary. If the piece exposed is sold for more, the whole price shall be the artist's; but if the purchaser's value is at less than the committee, the artist shall be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition.

A CIRCASSIAN SCOTCHMAN.

IN the recently published work on Russia, by Mr. D. Mackenzie Wallace (Cassell), is the following curious account of an old Scottish settlement:—

"As an instance of the ethnological curiosities which the traveller may stumble upon unawares in this curious region, I may mention a strange acquaintance I made when travelling on the great plain

which stretches from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian. One day I accidentally noticed on my travelling map the name 'Shotlándskaya Kolóniya' (Scottish Colony) near the celebrated baths of Piatigorsk. I was at that moment in Stávropol, a town about eighty miles to the north, and could not gain any satisfactory information as to what this colony was. Some well-informed people assured me that it really was what its name implied, whilst others asserted as confidently that it was simply a small German settlement. To decide the matter I determined to visit the place myself, though it did not lie in my intended route, and I accordingly found myself one morning in the village in question. The first inhabitants whom I encountered were unmistakably German, and they professed to know nothing about the existence of Scotchmen in the locality, either at the present or in former times. This was disappointing, and I was about to turn away and drive off, when a young man, who proved to be the schoolmaster, came up, and on hearing what I desired, advised me to consult an old Circassian who lived at the end of the village, and was well acquainted with local antiquities. On proceeding to the house indicated, I found a venerable old man, with fine, regular features of the Circassian type, coal-black sparkling eyes, and a long, grey beard that would have done honour to a patriarch. To him I explained briefly, in Russian, the object of my visit, and asked whether he knew of any Scotchmen in the district.

"And why do you wish to know?" he replied, in Russian, fixing me with his keen eyes.

"Because I am myself a Scotchman, and hoped to find fellow-countrymen here."

"Let the reader imagine my astonishment when, in reply to this, he answered, in genuine, broad Scotch, 'Eh, man, I'm a Scotchman ta! My name is John Abercrombie. Did ye never hear tell o' John Abercrombie, the famous Edinburgh doctor?'"

"I was fairly puzzled by this extraordinary declaration. Dr. Abercrombie's name was familiar to me as that of a medical practitioner and writer on psychology, but I knew that he was long since dead. When I had recovered a little from my surprise, I ventured to remark to the enigmatical personage before me that, though his tongue was certainly Scotch, his face was as certainly Circassian."

"Weel, weel," he replied, evidently enjoying my look of mystification, "you're no' far wrang. I'm a Circassian Scotchman!"

"This extraordinary admission did not diminish my perplexity, so I begged him to be more explicit, and he at once complied with my request. His long story may be told in a few words:—

"In the first years of the present century a band of Scotch missionaries came to Russia for the purpose of converting the Circassian tribes, and received from the Emperor Alexander I a large grant of land in this place, which was then on the frontier of the empire. Here they founded a mission, and began the work; but they soon discovered that the surrounding population were not idolaters, but Mussulmans, and consequently impervious to Christianity. In this difficulty they fell on the happy idea of buying Circassian children from their parents and bringing them up as Christians. One of these children, purchased about the year 1806, was a little boy called Teona. As he had been purchased with money subscribed by Dr. Abercrombie, he had received in baptism that gentleman's name, and he

considered himself the foster-son of his benefactor. Here was the explanation of the mystery.

"Teona, alias Mr. Abercrombie, was a man of more than average intelligence. Besides his native tongue, he spoke English, German, and Russian perfectly; and he assured me that he knew several other languages equally well. His life had been devoted to missionary work, and especially to translating and printing the Scriptures. He had laboured first in Astrakhan, then for four years and a half in Persia—in the service of the Bâle mission—and afterwards for six years in Siberia.

"The Scottish Mission was suppressed by the Emperor Nicholas about the year 1835, and all the missionaries except two returned home. The son of one of these two (Galloway) is the only genuine Scotchman remaining. Of the 'Circassian Scotchmen,' there are several, most of whom have married Germans. The other inhabitants are German colonists from the province of Sarátov, and German is the language commonly spoken in the village."

Varieties.

ANAGRAMS.—A story is told of an English lady, Mrs. Eleanor Davies, who imagined herself to be a prophetess, and fancied that the spirit of Daniel was in her, because she could transpose her name into "Reveal, O Daniel." Her anagram was faulty, however, lacking an *s* and containing an *l* too much. Her surprise and consternation was great when one day she saw an anagram of the same "Dame Eleanor Davies" which read, "Never so mad a ladie." Here are a few examples of anagrams. They are excellent, because the anagrams form an answer, as it were, to the original word:—Astronomers, moon starers; telegraphs, great helps; gallantries, all great sin; encyclopedia, a nice cold pye; lawyers, sly ware; misanthrope, spare him not; old England, golden land; Presbyterian, best in prayer; punishment, nine thumps; penitentiary, nay, I repent it; radical reform, rare mad frolic; revolution, to love ruin.

RUSSIA IN THE EAST.—Should Russia be permitted to annex Kashgar, Balkh, and Merve, an invasion of India would be by no means so difficult or impossible as some people would have us believe. Russia, if her reserves were called out, would be able to dispose of 1,300,000 men. In the event of a campaign the 847,847 men in her active establishment could be reckoned upon as available for offensive purposes. The province of Turkistan is the one which most closely adjoins our Indian empire. Here, according to Russian data, there are 33,893 men. I use the term "Russian data" because we have no means of knowing whether these figures are accurate. At the present moment, the greater part of the forces in the Western Siberian, Orenburg, and Kazan districts might be concentrated in the neighbourhood of Tashkent and Samarcand, and no one in this country would be the wiser. We have no consular agents in any of the towns through which these troops would have to march on their road to Turkistan. No Englishmen are allowed to travel in Central Asia. Owing to the Russian newspapers being completely in the hands of the authorities, the information which is published may be purposely intended to mislead. If the Governor-General in Turkistan were forming large *étapes*, or depôts, of provisions and arms in Samarcand, Khiva, and Krasnovodsk, we should be equally ignorant, until awaking up one morning we might discover that instead of our having to fight an enemy 2,000 miles distant from his base of operations, that a base had been formed within 350 miles of our Indian frontier, which was as well supplied with all the requisites for war as St. Petersburg or Moscow. In the Caucasus there is a standing army of 151,161 men, within easy water communication of Ashourade. Along the valley of the Attrek to Herat there are no natural obstacles to impede an advancing force; indeed, if the Afghans, tempted by the idea of looting the rich cities in the plains of India, were to join an invader, he might give us a little trouble.—*Captain Burnaby's Ride to Khiva.*

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